The

VOL. 92—NO. 226 Press Run Today {Post—17,150 News—13,000} Total—30,150 FREDERICK, MARYLAND 21701 THURSDAY,

Olson family to sue CIA

By ROLLIE ATKINSON
Staff Writer

Dr. Frank R. Olson, a former biochemist at Fort Detrick, has been identified by his Frederick family as the civilian employe of the U.S. Army who committed apparent suicide after being secretly administered LSD by Central Intelligence Agency personnel in November, 1953.

The truth behind Olson's death, hidden from questioning co-workers and his bereaved family for nearly 22 years, is finally coming to light following the June 10, 1975 release of the Rockefeller Commission report investigating CIA activities within the United States which included an account of Olson's bizarre death without identifying him.

At a press conference held today in the Olson family's Old Braddock home, Olson's family said in a prepared statement they plan to sue the CIA for "illegally and negligently" administering LSD to their father and husband for subsequent cover-ups for true details and reasons for his death.

A former colleague of Olson's in Fort Detrick's Special Operations division revealed that he and two other researchers besides Olson had been given LSD by CIA employes on at least one occasion.

The disclosures by Olson's family now confirmed by David W. Bellin of the Rockefeller Commission make true suspicions of some of Olson's co-workers that he had died as a result of drug tests by a secret government agency.

The Rockefeller report on the CIA states that a man (Olson) was given LSD while attending a meeting with CIA personnel working on a project that involved the administering of such drugs to Americans.

"This individual was not made aware he had been given LSD until about 20 minutes after it had been administered. He developed serious side effects and was sent to New York with a CIA escort for psychiatric treatment," the commission report said.

"Several days later he jumped from a tenth floor window of his hotel room and died as a result."

Olson's family was told only that he "fell or jumped" from his tenth floor Hotel Statler room in New York at 2:30 on the morning of Nov. 28, 1953.

News

JULY 10, 1975 FOUR SECTIONS 32 PAGES FIRST SECTION PRICE: TEN CENTS

for scientist's death

His wife, Mrs. Alice Wicks Olson of Old Braddock, stated in the prepared statement Thursday that her husband had returned from a meeting with other members of the Special Operations division research group conveying "self-doubt, self-recrmination and great anxiety."

At the time Mrs. Olson attributed her husband's mood to the nature of his highly secretive work in chemical germ warfare research. But during the ensuing week Olson failed to improve his irrational behavior and was advised by persons at Fort Detrick to seek psychiatric help.

Dr. Olson was taken to New York by Special Operations employes and CIA liaison personnel and never seen again by his family. According to a colleague of Olson's at least four other Special Operations employes were also given doses of LSD by CIA agents.

Olson's family said it did not become aware of the CIA inspired details surrounding his death until they read accounts of the Rockefeller Commission findings in the June 11, 1975, newspapers.

According to the Rockefeller report the CIA conducted its drug experiements on unsuspecting subjects until 1963. The report also states that all CIA files related to the drug testing were ordered destroyed in 1973.

Several of Dr. Olson's co-workers at Fort Detrick disclosed that many rumors and suspicions surrounded reports of Olson's death in 1953.

"There was a lot of discussion about it," said one co-worker, "and one of the stories which circulated had it just about the way it happened. Of course we didn't know what LSD was back then."

"Whenever anything happened like that," said another co-worker, "there were suspicions and we wondered about what might have really happened."

The Special Operations research division at Detrick was deeply involved with chemical biological warfare and was carried out under Defense Department classifications for tight security and secrecy.

Olson's family says they have reason to believe that other CIA activities surrounded the Detrick research group and at least two CIA agents were

(Continued On Page A-5)

permanently assigned to the Special Operations division.

The Rockefeller Commission also reported that the CIA "explored much larger programs for controlling human behavior including electrical shock, radiation, psychology, psychiatry, sociology and harassment substances."

"In light of these patterns of CIA activity we have concluded that the CIA, envisioned as an organization to protect the freedom and security of Americans has in fact substantially threatened these values," the Olson family said in their prepared statement Thursday.

Present at a news conference in the Olson home in Old Braddock Thursday afternoon at which several representatives of the national media attended were Dr. Olson's three children, Lisa Olson Hayward, Nils Olson and Eric Olson and his wife, Alice.

Vincent L. Ruwet of Frederick was a superior of Olson's at the time of his death and was charged with notifying the family of the biochemist's death.

When asked what official explanation he had given the Olson family, Ruwet gave only a "no comment."

Ruwet was also asked what the Special Operations group had been involved with and if recent Rockefeller Commission findings were related to Olson's death and the germ warfare research group. He said: "I am not authorized to talk to you (News-Post)."

Shortly after the death according to the Olson family account and the Rockefeller Commission report, the family received word that the death resulted from "circumstances arising out of an experiement undertaken in the course of his official duties for the United States government."

The Olsons subsequently received employe's compensation (two-thirds of Olson's salary) because the death was declared work-related.

Dr. Olson who held M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin and first came to Frederick in 1943 to begin the biochemical research at Detrick was buried in Frederick's Memorial Park at Linden Hills on Nov. 31, 1953.